

TORREYA

June, 1901

"WHEN IN ROME DO AS THE ROMANS DO"

BY P. A. RYDBERG

Professor E. L. Greene has lately published a very interesting article in the *Catholic University Bulletin* under the title, "Some Literary Aspects of American Botany" in which he criticizes especially the forms of titles used by botanical authors in America. I intend here to point out some misuses in naming plants. If, in attempting to do this, I should myself make some blunders, I trust they may be pardoned and corrected by some more competent critic.*

The old proverb, "When in Rome do as the Romans do," may well be applied to the use of Latin in botanical descriptions and terms. In other words, when we use the Latin language in science we should always try to use it as a Roman would have done. Latin descriptions such as two which were published in one of our leading botanical journals a few years ago † bring discredit to the author as well as to the journal that prints them.

This time I shall, however, dwell only upon specific names given in the honor of some person. Two methods have been used by biologists, viz., the Latin genitive form of the proper noun and an adjective formed from the same by appending *-anus*, *-ana*, *-anum*. Many botanists have agreed to use the former when the person in whose honor the plant is to be named has discovered it, described it or done any other work in connection

* Even the best may make mistakes sometimes, as was illustrated in the article cited above, where Professor Greene misquoted a title he criticized. On page 153 appears "Contributions to the Comparative Histology of Pulvini and the Resulting Pholeolitic Movements," and on page 157, "Pholiotic Movements" instead of " * * * Photeolic Movements" as it reads in the original.

† Bot. Gaz. 26: 268, 269. 1898.

[The exact date of publication of each issue of TORREYA is given in the succeeding number. Vol. 1, No. 5, comprising pages 49-60, was issued May 22, 1901.]

with it, and the latter when the author wishes to honor some friend without the latter being otherwise connected with the plant. The acceptance of this distinction is far from universal, however.

If a friend happens to discover an undescribed species and one wishes to name it after him, it is important to know how to give his name in a proper Latin form. The Berlin botanists have adopted the following rules: If the name ends in a consonant other than *r*, add *-ii* to the name, but if the name ends in a vowel or *r*, add *-i*.^{*} We therefore say *Carex Bicknellii*, but *C. Torreyi* and *C. Fraseri*. The only exception to these rules admitted by the Berlin botanists is in case the name ends in *a*, when it follows the first declension with *-ae* in the genitive, as for instance *Physalis Lagascae*, named after the Spanish botanist Lagasca.

The adding of *-ii* or *-i* to the proper name of any barbarian language has not come down to us from the classic Latin; for the old Romans latinized names in many different ways, and if they could not give it a good Latin form, they adopted it as it was and made it indeclinable. The custom mentioned comes to us from the middle ages, when Latin was the language of the learned and every learned man must have a Latin name. Most of them formed this by adding *-ius* or *-us* to the name, so that Des Cartes became *Cartesius*, Rudbeck, *Rudbeckius*, and Ray, *Raius*; others, however, translated their names, as for instance Bock, who called himself *Tragus*.

The adding of *-ius* and *-us* in the nominative and *-ii* and *-i* in the genitive is good, as a rule, whenever the name is not already in good Latin form. It would never occur to a Roman to write *Lagascai* as the genitive of Lagasca, and the Berlin botanists have seen it in that light, but would it not be as ludicrous in the eyes of a Roman to see the genitive of Magnus written *Magnusii*? And still the Berlinese cite this as the proper form. Names such as Retzius, Hieronymus, Wislizenus, etc., have a good Latin nominative form (*Hieronymus* was used in old Latin), and no ending needs to be added. It would be worse than grammar school Latin to write in the genitive *Retziusii*, *Hieronymusii* and *Wislizensusii*. American botanists have, in general, refrained from such forms. The only name that in America has been treated

^{*} If the friend were a lady, *-iae* and *-ae* should then be substituted, respectively.

somewhat in the Berlin fashion, is that of a German, Mr. Purpus, in whose honor *Eriogonum Purpusi*, etc., have been named; but the Americans have satisfied themselves with only one *-i* at the end.

The use of *-i* instead of *-ii* even after a consonant has been very common in this country. Watson, for instance, almost always used one *-i*. Plants named after Dr. Chapman are nearly always *Chapmani* (one *-i*) and there are perhaps ten species named *Engelmanni* (one *-i*) to one called *Engelmannii* (two *-i*'s). In the mediaeval Latin names ending in *-mann* were written with the ending *-mannus*, without an *i*. The genitive therefore had only one *-i*. Whether we should keep up this tradition or not is a matter of taste. We have no precedent in classical Latin to follow. There are cases, however, where a consonant should be followed by only one *-i* as in *Bernhardi*, *Gerardi*, etc., as Bernhard and Gerard have old Latin forms in *-us*, *Bernhardus*, *Gerardus*. In the same way, I think, we should write *Richardi*, *Howardi*, *Harvardi*, *Bongardi*, etc., all with one *-i*.

Names ending in *r* take according to the Berlin rule one *-i*. This is not because *r* is a semivowel and the nominative therefore should end in *-us* instead of *-ius*, but simply because those ending in *-er* have as they stand a Latin nominative ending, and the Berlinese let the few ending in *-ar*, *-ir*, *-or*, *-ur* follow the same rule. An old Roman would never have done this. The latter names should follow the third declension, like the Latin words, *nectar*, *victor*, *robur*, *vultur*, etc. Fendler, Berlandier, Fraser, Heller, Carpenter, Porter, etc., being in good Latin form as they stand, follow the second declension regularly, with *Fendleri*, *Berlandieri*, etc., in the genitive; but Bolivar, Victor, Arthur and Muir should have the genitives *Bolivaris*, *Victoris*, *Arthuris* and *Muiris*, unless the last may be regarded as an exception and follow the declension of *vir* (*-i*).

According to the Berlin rules, names ending in a vowel (except *a*) should take one *-i*. Those ending in *-a*, follow the first declension. Why should not those ending in *-o* follow the third? All foreign words ending in *-o*, taken into Latin, followed the third declension; and this was not only the case with Greek words, but also those from the Phoenician, the Egyptian and

other barbaric tongues. Why should we not follow the same custom in botanical names? Ledebour wrote *Claytonia Chamissoi*; but Eschscholtz had before him in manuscript, *C. Chamissonis*. Many of the later botanists have used the proper form. We have, therefore, *Aquilegia Ottonis*, *Cyperus Ottonis*, *Lupinus Chamissonis*, *Viburnum Demetronis*, *Sullivantia Ohionis*. These forms are much more common and of course far better than such as *Astragalus Serenoi*.

But if names ending in *-o* should follow the third declension, then should also those ending in *-on*. Here, however, botanists have seldom tried to follow Latin customs. We find both *Brittoni*, *Eatoni*, etc., and *Brittonii*, *Eatonii*; but not *Brittonis*, *Eatonis*, etc., which would be better. Besides myself, who have used *Wootonis* and *Congdonis* as specific names, I think no American botanist has used a genitive in *-onis*, in naming a plant in honor of a person whose name ends in *-on*. I know of one case in which such a genitive was used, but the plant was not named after a person. I refer to *Astragalus Zionis* Jones.

A German may claim that Anton has the Latin form *Antonius*, which follows the second declension with *-ii* in the genitive; but we must remember that Anton is a German and Scandinavian form and that the name is written in French Antoine and in English Anthony, while most of the names ending in *-on* are French or English, and in the latter case derived from the Norman-French or formed under its influence. The majority of modern French words ending in *-on* came from Latin words ending in *-o* or *-on*, both with *-onis* in the genitive. I think, therefore, that all names ending in *-on*, at least those belonging to any of the Romance languages or derived from them, should follow the third declension.

The extension of this rule to names ending in *-son*, as Anderson, Nelson, etc., is perhaps of doubtful propriety. These are all of Scandinavian origin and have a peculiar history. In Sweden they have never, until in later years, been regarded or treated as family names. Peterson meant Peter's son and nothing more. If Peter Anderson had a son by the name of John, he would be known not as John Anderson, but as John Peterson; and John's son Nels would be Nels Johnson. From the middle ages to the

later part of the eighteenth century, these names were often written in Latin. The first Protestant Archbishop of Sweden was Lars Peterson, who usually wrote his name *Laurentius Petri* (the word *filius* being understood). In Swedish history we read both of *Olaus Magnus* (Big Olof, so called for his size) and *Olaus Magni* (Olof Magnuson). In the genitive both names would be *Olai Magni*. The old way of writing Johnson, Anderson, Larson, etc., could scarcely be used in botanical names, as it would cause much confusion, and the names would scarcely be recognizable. The three above mentioned would be respectively, *Johannis*, *Andree*, and *Laurentii*. If a Roman had seen Anderson written, without knowing the meaning or derivation, he would very likely have written the genitive as *Andersonis*. He might perhaps have given it the Latin form *Andersonius* (-ii); but never as many of our botanists do, *Andersonus* (-i).

If a Roman had seen the name Ames, he would probably have written it in the genitive *Amis*, according to the third declension. It is perhaps safer to latinize such names and write *Amesius* (-ii), in the same way as Des Cartes became *Cartesius* (-ii).

From the foregoing it would appear that the Berlin rules must be modified in order to accord with good Latin usage, and that the latinizing of proper nouns is a matter that needs the attention of a botanical congress.

HETEROPHYLLY IN HEPATICA ACUTA

BY S. H. BURNHAM

A few years ago, while collecting in an old rich wood near Vaughns, Washington County, New York, I found several plants of an interesting acute-leaved *Hepatica*, and transplanted a single plant in my wild garden, where the leaves have remained constantly seven- to nine-lobed. The normal form has leaves with three acute lobes, sometimes passing into *Hepatica Hepatica* (L.) Karst., with which it sometimes grows, though it usually blooms a week earlier in northern New York. Often, leaves are five-lobed; but rarely is the lobing carried so far as in the above plants.